



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEARLY HALF OF FISH LANDED IN U. S. GOES INTO MEAL AND OIL

About 46 percent of all fish landed at U. S. ports is utilized in fish meal and fish oil, according to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. The importance of the fisheries that supply this great industry is little known by the public -- principally because the fishery products are used where they are not recognized as "fish".

On the farm, fish meal is an important ingredient of poultry and hog feeds. Bird and animal "converters" turn fish into chops, roasts, drumsticks and eggs. In industry, fish oil is made into such things as soap, paint, varnish, insect spray, machinery lubricants, printing ink, oil cloth and linoleum, and is used in industrial processes like leather tanning and aluminum casting.

Thus, meal and oil from fish are converted into products which are used daily by everyone in the United States, the Fish and Wildlife Service points out.

The raw material is derived from two sources -- whole fish caught specifically for reduction purposes and fish-waste resulting from filleting, canning and other processes. Fully 2.25 billion pounds of fish -- or 46 percent of the 1949 catch of 4.9 billion pounds -- was processed by meal and oil manufacturers.

The two principal fish utilized by rendering plants are menhaden and pilchards -- small herring-like fish that school in tremendous numbers in the open sea. The menhaden catch last year was 1,064,000,000 pounds, while that of pilchards amounted to 640,000,000 pounds. The pilchard catch -- in the Pacific -- reached a high of 1,500,000,000 pounds in 1936. Following that year the catch fluctuated between 800,000,000 and 1,300,000,000 pounds -- declining sharply after 1945 to a low of 250,000,000 pounds in 1947, and then increasing. While the catch of pilchards was fluctuating, the menhaden catch in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico increased to record levels.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has prepared a series of graphs illustrating the uses of fish products. Titles are as follows: The Utilization of the U. S. Catch of Fishery Products, 1929-49; Whole Fish and Fish Waste Used for Manufacture into Meal and Oil, 1921-49; U. S. Production of Fish Scrap and Meal, 1921-49; U. S. Production of Fish Oils and Marine-animal Oils, 1921-49; Value of U. S. Production and Imports of Fish and Marine-animal Oils, 1929-49; and U. S. Imports of Fish Meal and Scrap, 1937 and 1949.

The graphs may be obtained by writing to the Branch of Commercial Fisheries, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C.

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